



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

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July 2013

To: School Food Authority Administrators

From: Christine Emerson, Director
School Nutrition Programs

Re: Administrative Update 2013-14



Welcome back to school! The first step to participating in OPI School Nutrition Programs during SY 2013-14 is to update your Sponsor and Site Information Sheets at <https://apps2.opi.mt.gov/cnp/Login.asp>. Please update this information as soon as possible; no later than **September 30, 2013**. Here are some tips for navigating in the system:

Once you log in, click on Program Year 2014. Much of the information is carried over from the previous school year. Please take time to ensure that all information included on the Sponsor and Site Information Sheets is correct, including contact names and phone numbers.

Items to Note on the Site Information Sheets:

- *Lines 45-50 that include the second preceding year and preceding year data will be automatically filled in.*
- *Lines 51-53 do not need to be updated. The free and reduced-price eligibility information will be updated when you submit your October claim for reimbursement.*
- *Line 115-116 Menu Planning - by submitting the form, you are attesting that the school will continue to follow the new meal pattern requirements.*

The second step to operating School Nutrition Programs during SY 2013-14 is helping students access school meals through direct certification and free and reduced-price school meals applications. We have some major changes this school year. Districts will now use an online Direct Certification Application (DCA) system to match eligible households enrolled in SNAP/TANF for free meals. The DCA system is scheduled to be available online by August 1. Access to the online system will be confirmed through a System Security and User Access Assignment Form. Please submit this form to OPI if you have not done so already.

The following letters are available through the Direct Certification system:

- Notice of Direct Certification (required – households will no longer receive the August letter from DPHHS, so this letter will now let them know that they are eligible for free school meals because of their SNAP participation.) Be sure to mail (not put in backpacks) this letter to households to maintain confidentiality.
- Ending of 30 day carry over for those that were previously certified (optional)

Once you have completed direct certification, mail applications to households that are not directly certified for school meals.



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Per USDA policy memo SP 21-2013 <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2013/SP21-2013os.pdf>, the USDA asks that we use their prototype Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application materials:

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has developed a new version of the prototype Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application package. This “family friendly” application package has been simplified to include only the information that families need when first applying for free or reduced price meals in the school meals programs. The application package is intended to be an easy way for families to have an application readily available that they can submit.

The following updated materials for households applying for free or reduced-price meals are available on the School Nutrition Programs website at www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html in the Forms and Guidelines page. These forms are **required** to successfully administer the School Nutrition Programs.

Required forms for free and reduced-price applications include:

- Public Release
- Letter to Households
- Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application and Instructions for Applying
- Notice to Households of Approval/Denial of Benefits
- Income Eligibility Guidelines 2013-14

Insert your district’s specific information in the **[bold bracketed fields]** of the required forms. If you make additional changes, you must submit them to OPI School Nutrition Programs for approval.

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 required changes to the Summary of Verification form. The new form is titled the School Food Authority Verification Collection Report. The report has been incorporated into the new DCA system for districts to submit electronically to OPI. Information about Verification will be sent to your district soon.

Included with this memo you will find a food allergy book. This new resource can help you prepare for students with food allergies. Additional resources about working with children with special dietary needs can be found on the OPI, School Nutrition Programs website (from the menu click Forms & Guidelines then Civil Rights and Special Needs).

Call our office at (406) 444-2501 with questions. Have a wonderful school year!